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JUSTIFICATION

BY

FAITH ALONE:

Being the Substance of a

LETTER

From the Rev. Mr. B—ge, in *Cambridge-shire*, to a Clergyman in *Nottingham-shire*; giving an Account of a great Work of GOD wrought in his own Heart, &c.

To which is here added, by way of Preface, a Word or two upon Justification by Faith, and how affected in an instantaneous Manner, &c.

By Grace are ye saved, through Faith, Eph. ii. 8.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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To the R E A D E R.

I N the first publication of this Letter, about a year ago, intitled, *A Fragment of True Religion*, &c *. the editor addresses his readers in a low pitiful oration, relating how he came by a copy of it ; therein endeavouring, as much as possible, to degrade and lessen the character of that sincere, honest and worthy minister of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Mr. BERRIDGE. Yet, nevertheless, has therein confessed many notable truths of him : tho' its plain he intended no good thereby. O ! were the children of this world but truly sensible what good they do, and of what benefit it is to the souls of God's dear ministers and people to be reviled and persecuted for their Master's sake, they would quickly have done with their wicked and wrong-grounded aspersions ; for, as one said, a Christian is like *camomile*, the more it is trodden the better it thrives. Alas ! alas ! how it must grieve the heart of every sincere christian to see our late reformed church of England, (the best established church in the world) sinking again into the very dregs of Rome. The doctrine of the fall ; original sin ; and justification by faith in the blood of Christ, as set forth in her articles and homilies,

B 2

continually

* This letter was wrote by Mr. Berridge, to an intimate acquaintance, in order to give him an account of himself, and what God had done for his Soul. But as things of this kind, (to the unawakened) frequently become a jest and ridicule, so it happened here ; copies of it were taken and handed about the country, from one to another, till at last it was sent up to London, and printed without the author's consent ; but this Third Edition is fold by his leave.

continually rejected and opposed by her own members: not only by the unlearned, but also by the learned, even the clergy themselves, who at their ordination do solemnly engage to preach and maintain those doctrines; declaring in the presence of God; they find themselves moved thereunto by the Holy Ghost. And yet alas! how very rarely do we find THOSE who have taken this weighty task (the care of souls) upon them, performing this engagement as they ought. May the Lord convince them of their error, and bring them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

But, as numberless have been the scruples and disputes, and are to this day, both with learned and unlearned, concerning justification, or the forgiveness of sins, how it can be a sudden or instantaneous work affected upon the heart, and how a poor guilty sinner, can know assuredly, that God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven him all his sins, &c.—This no unawakened person can believe: but as all holy scripture was written for our instruction; I would, therefore, mention a few instances, which I hope, through Christ, will be a help to some in this matter.

1st, Take the account given, *John* chap. viii. of the woman taken in adultery, who was brought before Christ, that he might finish the sentence against her. The poor guilty creature, doubtless, stood trembling before him, her own conscience accusing her, and expected every moment to be delivered up to the executors: but so far from this, our blessed Lord, (who was not then come to condemn, but rather to save sinners) instead of condemning her, justified her freely, bid her *go and sin no more*. And 'tis believed, that she never did commit that sin any more. For when the Lord proclaims pardon to a sinner, there is sufficient grace and strength, accompanying the word to save such

such souls from the power, as well as the guilt of sin, if they are careful to use it. 2. I mention the story of Zaccheus, to whom our Lord said, *this day salvation is come to thy house.* 3d, That of Cornelius, Acts chap. x. a case quite parallel to Mr. Berridge's: he was said to be *a devout man, and prayed to God alway.* (The Lord increase the number of such;) and yet *one thing was wanting*, to make him a compleat Christian. How got he it? the Lord directed him to send for Peter. On Peter's coming and explaining the nature of Christ's Death, Resurrection, &c. and declaring *that whosoever believeth in his name shall receive remission of sins*: and 'tis said, that suddenly the Holy Ghost fell on them all. 4th, Is the case of the poor trembling joaler, Acts xvi. with many other single instances, but I shall close my account with just observing what happened at Peter's first sermon, Acts ii. What a clamour must there be, when 'tis said that the multitude were at once pricked in their hearts, trembling, and cried out, *men and brethren what must we do.*—To be saved, ver. 37. The preceeding verses shew how 3000 of them were instantly freed from their fears, and received into the church of Christ, &c. And generally those persons who are now-a-days so suddenly justified, are of this sort, who come to Christ self-aborred, and self-condemned, having nothing to plead, and nothing to pay, so Christ freely forgives them all,

This is his office, for this he came into the world, namely to save sinners. And no other qualification whatsoever in us, is necessary to this salvation but a true conviction, or sensibility of our lost estate, and a desire to be saved: the condition is *faith, faith only in our Lord Jesus Christ.* How useful or excellent soever human

learning may be in other matters, as it certainly is to all teachers, and yet, 'tis plain the possession of it never did or ever will bring a soul e'er the sooner to Christ, nor the lack of it, keep any one the longer from him; yea, it is evident, from many hundred years experience, the latter hath always had the pre-eminence.

A word or two concerning good works. The state and condition of it, according to the articles of our church; which declare, ' that works done ' before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of ' this holy spirit, (that is, before justification) ' are not pleasant to God because they spring not ' of faith in Jesus Christ as God hath willed and ' commanded.' See Art. 19. 'This I know is a great stumbling block to many good meaning men, but more so to the wise and learned, who so frequently err, *taking the wrong way*, as the wise man saith, *Prov. xiv. 13.* Or taking the case in a wrong light, (forgetting original sin.) And who can set this in a clearer light than our blessed Lord hath done, in the case of the tree and its fruit? *Matt. vii. 17, 18.* He who well knew, that the hearts of all men, by nature. were abominably wicked and corrupt; so that a corrupt heart, as well as *a corrupt tree, must be made good before its fruit can be good.*

This is the doctrine held and set forth by that learned methodist preacher, Mr. *J. Wesley*, as is fully explained in his *Appeals to men of reason and Religion.* And for the satisfaction of those that cannot, and some others that perhaps will not be at the pains to seek for it, I will insert the conclusion of what he has said on that head. After explaining the term justification by faith, and cleared up several objections against it, from scripture the

the articles, homilies and liturgy of the church ; he concludes thus, *

1. ' That no good works properly so called can go before justification.

2. ' That no degree of true sanctification can be previous to it.

3. ' That as the meritorious cause of justification is, the life and death of Christ ; so the condition of it, is faith, faith alone ; and

4. ' That both inward and outward holiness, are consequent on this faith, and are the ordinary, stated condition, of final justification.

' And what more can you desire, who have hitherto opposed *justification by faith alone*, merely upon a principle of conscience ; because you was zealous for holiness and good works ? do I not effectually secure these from contempt, at the same time that I defend the doctrines of the church ? I not only allow, but vehemently contend, that none shall ever enter into glory who is not holy on earth, as well in heart, as in all manner of conversation. I cry aloud, let all that have believed, be careful to maintain good works. What means then this endless strife of words ? or, what doth your arguing reprove ?

One word more to you my believing brethren. As all disputations of this kind tend little to the glory of God, I believe the best thing to be done, is to treat such persons with gentleness, pity, and love : if we can thus prevail over them, well, if not, let us bring those poor unbelieving souls to God in our prayers as objects of his mercy ; and never cease to pray for them, till God has answered our petitions according to his word, *Ask and it shall be given thee*. Ask life then for thy brother, and the Lord will grant it. And I am persuaded

* See further Appeal, P. 12.

suaded this would avail more in such cases, than twenty well wrote arguments—O that all the professed christians of this nation might cease from opinions and unprofitable disputations, and only strive who shall most excel in obedience to our blessed Redeemer, and love one towards another. Then shall the kingdom of Christ be exalted day by day, and that of Satan sink beneath our feet. Which that this may be the happy case, is the earnest wish and prayer of one of the least, most unworthiest, whom Christ has redeemed by his most precious blood.

J. W.

John Wesley

A L E T.

A LETTER, giving an Account of
his Life, Study, and Conversion: toge-
ther with the great Work of God among
his People.

Rev. Mr. Perrige

Rev. and dear Sir,

MY desire and intention in this letter is to inform you what the Lord has lately done for my soul: In order to this, it may be needful to give you a little previous information of my manner of life from my youth up to the present time.

When I was about the age of fourteen, God was pleased to shew me that I was a sinner, and that I must be *born again* before I could enter into his kingdom. Accordingly I betook myself to reading, praying and watching; and was enabled hereby to make some progress in sanctification. In this manner I went on, though not always with the same diligence, till about half a year ago. I thought myself in the right way to heaven, tho' as yet I was wholly out of the way; and imagined I was travelling towards Sion, though I had never yet set my face thitherwards. Indeed God would have shewn me that I was wrong, by not owning my ministry, but I paid no regard to this for a long time, imputing my want of success to the naughty hearts of my hearers, and not to my own naughty doctrine.

You may ask, perhaps, what was my doctrine? why, dear sir, it was the doctrine that every man will

will naturally hold whilst he continues in an unregenerate state, viz. That we are to be justified partly by our faith, and partly by our works. This doctrine I preached for six years at a curacy, which I served from college; and though I took some extraordinary pains, and pressed sanctification upon them very earnestly, yet they continued as unsanctified as before, and not one soul was brought to Christ. There was indeed a little more of the form of religion in the parish, but not a *whit* more of the *power*. At length I removed to Everton, where I have lived altogether. Here again I pressed sanctification and regeneration as vigorously as I could; but finding no success, after two years preaching in this manner, I began to be discouraged, and now some secret misgivings arose in my mind, that I was not right myself. (This happened about Christmas last.) Those misgivings grew stronger, and at last very painful. Being then under great doubts, I cried unto the Lord very earnestly. The constant language of my heart was this,— ‘ Lord if I am right keep me so; if I am not right, make me so. Lead me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.’

AFTER about ten days crying unto the Lord, he was pleased to return an answer to my prayers, and in the following wonderful manner. As I was sitting in my house one morning, and musing upon a text of scripture, the following words were darted into my mind with wonderful power, and seemed indeed like a voice from heaven, (viz.) ‘ *Cease from thy own works.*’ Before I heard these words, my mind was in a very unusual calm; but as soon as I heard them, my soul was in a tempest directly, and the tears flowed from my eyes like a torrent. The scales fell from my eyes immediately, and I now clearly saw the rock I had been splitting on for near thirty years.

Do you ask what this rock was? Why it was some secret reliance on my *own works* for salvation. I had hoped to be saved, partly in my *own* name, and partly in *Christ's* name; though I am told 'there is salvation in no other name, 'except in the name of Jesus Christ, Acts iv. 12.'—I had hoped to be saved partly through my own works, and partly through Christ's mercies; though I am told 'we are saved by grace through 'faith, and not of works, Eph. ii. 7, 8.'—I had hoped to make myself acceptable to God partly *through my own good works*, though we are told, 'that we are accepted *through the beloved*, Eph. 'i. 6.'—I had hoped to make my *peace* with God partly through my *own* obedience to his laws, though I am told, 'that peace is only to be had 'by faith, Rom. v. 1.' I had hoped to make myself a child of God by sanctification, though we are told 'that we are made children of God by 'faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 26. I had thought that regeneration, the new birth or new creature, consisted in sanctification, but now I know it consists in faith, 1 John v. 1.—Compare also these two passages together, Gal. vi. 15,—and Gal. v. 6,—where you will find that the new creature is *faith working by love*, the apostle adds these words, *working by love*, in order to distinguish a *living* faith from a *dead* one. I had thought that sanctification was the way to justification, but now I am assured that sanctification follows after justification; or in other words, that we must first be justified by faith before we can have any true sanctification by the spirit. When we are justified it is done *freely*, i. e. graciously, without any the least merits of ours, and solely by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. 24.—28.

All that is previously needful to justification is this, that we are convinced by the spirit of God
of

of our own utter sinfulness, Isa. lxiv. 6.—convinced that we are children of wrath by nature, on account of our birth-sin, Eph. ii. 3.—and that we are under the curse of God on account of actual sin, Gal. iii. 10.—And under these convictions come to the Lord Jesus Christ, renouncing all righteousness of our own, and relying solely on him, who is appointed to be the Lord our righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6. Again, Christ says, come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden (with the burden of sin) and I will give you rest, i. e. I will take the burden away, I will release you from the guilt of sin. Where you may observe, that the only thing required of us when we come to Christ, is to come burdened and sensible that none can remove this burden but Christ. Again, Christ did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. See also Luke iv. 18. Hear how he cries out in Isaiah lv. 1. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, “and drink; come buy wine and milk (i. e. the “blessings of the gospel) without money and without price.” Where we are ordered to bring no money, i. e. no merits of our own; we must not think to make a purchase of these blessings by any deserts of ours. They are offered freely, i. e. graciously, and must be received freely. Nothing more is required from us but to thirst after them. Why was the Pharisee rejected? (Luke xviii. 10, &c.) because he came pleading his own works before God. He was devout, just, chaste, and abstemious; and thanked God for enabling him to be so. Very well; so far all was right. But then he had some reliance on these works, and therefore pleads the merits of them before God. Which shewed that he did not know what a sinner he was and that he could only be saved by grace through faith. He opens his mouth before God, and pleads
his

Rom. x. 3.—I did not seek after righteousness through faith, but as it were by the works of the law. Thus I stumbled and fell, Rom. ix. 31, 32.—In short, to use a homely similitude, I put the justice of God into one scale, and as many good works of my own as I could into the other, and when I found, as I always did my own good works not to be a balance to the divine justice, I then threw in Christ, as a make-weight. And this every one really does who hopes for salvation, partly by doing what he can for himself, and then relying on Christ for the rest.

But, dear sir, Christ will either be a whole Saviour or none at all. And if you think you have any good service of your own to recommend you unto God, you are certainly without any interest in Christ: Be you ever so sober, serious, just and devout, you are still under the curse of God as I was, and know it not, provided you have any allowed reliance on your own works, and think they are to do something for you, and Christ to do the rest.

I now proceed to acquaint you with the success I have lately had in my ministry. As soon as God had opened my own eyes, and shewed me the true way to salvation, I began immediately to preach it. And now I dealt with my hearers in a very different manner from what I used to do. I told them very plainly, that they were children of wrath, and under the curse of God, though they knew it not, and that none but Jesus Christ could deliver them from that curse. I asked them, if they had ever broke the law of God once in thought, word, or deed? If they had, they were then under the curse: For it is written, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' And again, 'He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of

'all.' If indeed we could keep the whole law without offending in one point; if we had done and could continue to do all the things in God's law, then indeed we might lay claim to eternal life on the score of our own works. But who is sufficient for these things? If we break God's law we immediately fall under the curse of it, and none can deliver us from this curse but Jesus Christ. There is an end for ever after of any justification from our own works. No future good behaviour can make any atonement for past miscarriages. If I keep all God's laws to day, this is no amends for breaking them yesterday. If I behave peaceably to my neighbour this day it is no satisfaction for having broke his head yesterday.

If therefore I am once under the curse of God, for having broken God's law, I can never after do any thing of myself to deliver me from this curse. I may then cry out, O wretched man, that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin? And find none able to deliver, but Jesus Christ, Rom. vii. 23, 24, 25. —So that if I am once a sinner, nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse me from sin. All my hopes are then in him, and I must fly to him as the only refuge set before me.

In this manner, dear sir, I preached and do preach to my flock, labouring to beat down self righteousness; labouring to shew them that they were all in a lost and perishing state, and that nothing could recover them out of this state, and make them children of God, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And now see the consequence. This was strange doctrine to my hearers. They were surprised, alarmed, and vexed. The old man, the carnal nature, was stirred up, and railed, and opposed the truth. However, the minds of most were seized with some convictions, and the hearts of some were truly broken for sin, so that they
came

came to me, as those mentioned in the Acts, throughly pricked to the heart, and crying out with strong and bitter cries, What must I do to be saved? I then laid the promises before them, and told them, if they found themselves under the curse, Christ was ready to deliver them from it; if they were really weary and heavy laden, Christ would give them rest; if their hearts were broken for sin, and they would look up unto Christ, he would heal them. I exhorted them also to thank God for these convictions, assuring them it was a token of good to their souls. For God must first smite the heart, before he can heal it, Isa. xix. 21. I generally found that they received comfort from the promises; and though they complained much of the burden of sin, and of an evil heart of unbelief, yet they always went away refreshed and comforted. Many have come unto me in this manner, and more are continually coming; and though some fall off from their first convictions, yet others cleave stedfastly unto the Lord. They begin to rejoice in him, and to love him; they love his word, and meditate much upon it; they exercise themselves in prayer, and adorn their profession by a suitable life and conversation.

And now let me make one reflection. I preached up sanctification very earnestly for six years in a former parish, and never brought one soul to Christ. I did the same at this parish for two years without any success at all; but as soon as ever I preached Jesus Christ, and faith in his blood, then believers were added to the church continually; then people flocked from all parts to hear the glorious sound of the gospel, some coming six miles, others eight, and others ten, and that constantly. And now let me ask, what is the reason why my ministry was not blessed, when I preached up salvation partly by faith, and partly by works? It is because this doctrine is not of

God ; and he will prosper no ministers but such as preach salvation in his own appointed way, (viz.) by faith in Jesus Christ.

Let me now apply myself to your own heart, and may God dispose you to receive my words in the spirit of meekness. Indeed sir, I love and respect you, else I could not have wrote to you so freely. Are you then in the same error, that I was in, for near forty years, (viz.) that you must be saved partly by faith, and partly by works ? And have you constantly preached this doctrine ? Then you may be certainly assured of these two things : First, That you never yet brought one soul to Christ by your ministry. And secondly, That you are not yet in the way to salvation yourself. Oh ! be not displeased with me for telling you the truth. But you will say, perhaps, that you have not only been sincere, but ever zealous in preaching the word of God. So was I ; but there is a zeal which is not according to knowledge ; and that zeal I had, though I knew it not. You may say farther, that you have read and prayed much, so have I, but still I knew nothing as I ought to know, 'till God was pleased to shew me that I was blind, and then I cried heartily to him for light and direction, and he opened mine eyes, John ix. 39.

Dear Sir, will you attend to the following advice ? it is very safe advice, be the state of your soul what it will. Pray to God to lead you into the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Beseech God to keep you in the truth, if you have received it ; or if you are in error, to reveal it unto you. If you will do this heartily and constantly, God will not suffer you to abide long in darkness, if indeed you are in darkness, James i. 5.

I now proceed to give you some further account of myself, and of the Impediments which kept me from the truth. When I first came to the university, I applied myself diligently to my studies,

thinking human learning to be a necessary qualification for a divine, and that no one ought to preach unless he had taken a degree in the university. Accordingly I studied the classics, mathematics, philosophy, logic, metaphysics, and read the works of our most eminent divines; and this I did for twenty years; and all the while was departing more and more from the truth as it is in Jesus; vainly hoping to receive that light and instruction from human wisdom, which could only be had from the word of God and prayer.

During this time I was thought a methodist by some people, only because I was a little more grave, and took a little more pains in my ministry than some others of my brethren; but in truth I was no methodist at all, for I had no sort of acquaintance with them, and could not abide their fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, and thought it high presumption in any to preach, unless they had taken holy orders. But when God was pleased to open mine eyes about half a year ago, he shewed and taught me other things. Now I saw that nothing had kept me so much from the truth as a desire of human wisdom. Now I perceived, that it was as difficult for a wise or learned man to be saved, as it was for a rich man or a nobleman, 1 *Cor.* i. 26. Now I saw that God chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, for two plain reasons; 1st, That no flesh should glory in his presence, 1 *Cor.* i. 29.—And, 2dly, to shew that faith did not stand or was not produced, by the wisdom of man, but by the power of God, 1 *Cor.* ii. 5. Now I discerned, that no one could understand the word of God, but by the spirit of God, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. Now I saw that every believer was anointed by the holy spirit, and thereby led to the knowledge of all needful truths, 1 *John* ii. 20. And of course that every true believer was qualified to preach the

gospel, provided he had the gift of utterance. Now I saw that the methodists doctrine of justification by Faith, was the very doctrine of the gospel; and I did no longer wonder at the success which those preachers met with, whether they were clergymen or laymen. They preached Christ's doctrine and Christ owned it; so that many were added to the faith daily.

But you will say perhaps, that these methodists are schismatics. Let us therefore examine the matter. A schismatic is one that dissents and divides from an established church; at least this is the general notion of a schismatic. Now I ask, what do you mean by a church, or what is it that makes one church to differ from another? It is the doctrine. The church of England differs from the church of Rome, not by its steeples, bells, or vestments, but by its doctrines. Schism therefore consists in departing from the doctrines of a church, and not from the walls of a church. In the time of Sirbitch fair, one sermon is always preached in the open fields to the people at the fair, and preached by some fellow of a college or clergyman at Cambridge. Now I ask, would you call this clergyman a schismatic? No surely. And yet he preaches in the open fields, and upon unconsecrated ground. It is plain then, that schism doth not consist in preaching out of the walls of a church, but in preaching contrary to the doctrines of the church.

And now, dear sir, let me lay open my sin and my shame unto you. I solemnly subscribed to the articles of our church; and gave my hearty assent and consent to them. Amongst the rest, I declared that, "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings, and that we are justified by faith only," as it is expressed in the eleventh article. But though I solemnly subscribed this article, I
neither

neither believed nor preached it : but preached salvation, partly by faith and partly by works. And oh, what dreadful hypocrisy, what shameful prevarication was this ! I called and thought myself a churchman, though I was really a dissenter and a schismatic ; for I was undermining the fundamental doctrine of our church, and the fundamental doctrine of the gospel, namely justification by faith only, and yet dreadful as my case was, I fear it is the case of most of the clergy in England. Scarce any thing is preached but justification by faith and works. And what is the consequence ? Why, there is scarce any true religion amongst us, the gospel of Christ is not truly preached by us, and Christ will not own our ministry. Look around the parishes which are near you, and see whether you can find any thing besides the form of religion, and not much of that. Nay, amongst those who are thought religious people ; who are sober, serious, just and devout ; who read, and fast, and pray, and give alms ; amongst those you will scarce find one, who knows any thing of the power of religion, and has experimental knowledge of it. For if you ask such people in the very words of scripture, “ Whether “ they know that Jesus Christ is in them, otherwise, they are reprobates.” 2 Cor. xiii. 5 : “ Whether Christ dwells in their hearts by faith.” Eph. iii. 17. Whether their sins are forgiven for Christ’s name sake. 1 John ii. 12. Whether they have received an unction from the holy one. 1 John ii. 20. Whether the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Rom. v. 5. Whether they are filled with joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. Whether they walk in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost, and do ever rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Acts ix. 31. 1 Pet. i. 8. And lastly, whether the Holy Spirit bears witness with their own spirit,

that

that they are the children of God. Rom. viii. 14, 15, 16. If, I say, you ask the better sort amongst us, whether they have any experience of these matters: they would stare at you with the utmost amazement, and would think you an enthusiast, if they did not call you so. Now such people who have all the form, but none of the power of religion; who are outwardly reformed, but not inwardly renewed by the Holy Ghost; these are what our Saviour calls whited sepulchres, beautiful without, but full of rottenness within. They are striving to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but are not able: because they do not strive lawfully. For they do not seek to enter in through Jesus Christ, but partly through Christ, and partly through themselves; partly by faith and partly by works. These are the almost, but not altogether Christians.—And if at any time it happens that some amongst us are seized with deep conviction, and are made sensible of their utter need of Christ, and that they can only be justified by faith in his blood; these people not finding proper food for their souls in our churches, are obliged to go elsewhere, and seek it where they can find it. It is no wonder therefore that there are so few real Christians amongst us.—If you read over the homilies of the church, if you read over the fathers of the church, if you read the works of the good old bishops that were published an hundred years ago, you will there find the gospel of Christ preached, and the true doctrine of our own church. But since that time, I mean in the last century, our clergy have been gradually departing more and more from our doctrines, articles, and homilies; so that at length there was scarce a clergyman to be found, but who preached contrary to the articles he subscribed. And almost all the sermons that have been published in the last century, both by bishops and curates, are full of that soul-detestable doctrine, that we are to be justified partly

by our own works, and partly by Christ's merits.

Do you ask how all the clergy came to fall into this pernicious doctrine? I answer, very easily. Every man, whilst he continues under the power of the carnal mind, and is not awakened to see his utter lost condition, is naturally disposed to embrace this doctrine. For not being yet convinced by the spirit of God, that all his righteousness is as filthy rags; Isaiah lxiv. 6. and that he is without help and strength in himself, Rom. v. 6. I say, not being convinced of this he naturally goes about to establish some righteousness of his own, and cannot submit to the righteousness of God by Faith. Not being yet sensible of his utter lost and helpless state, he must have some reliance on himself: and thus instead of looking wholly to Jesus Christ for salvation, he looks partly to Christ, and partly to himself: instead of seeking for righteousness and strength from the Lord Jesus Christ, he seeks for it partly from Christ and partly from himself: instead of seeking to be justified in the Lord, he seeks after justification partly thro' the Lord, and partly through himself. But see what Christ saith of this matter, Isa. xlv. 22, 23, 24, 25.

And now let me ask how the whole church of Rome happened to depart from the simplicity of the gospel, and to fall into this doctrine of works and faith which we now preach. It was owing to the depraved nature of man, which makes him think himself to be something, and that he can do something, though he is nothing and can do nothing to justify himself in God's sight. At the reformation, our church returned again to Jesus Christ, and placed justification on the gospel footing of faith only. And so it continues to this day: but though our articles and homilies continue sound and evangelical, yet our clergy have departed once more from both, and are advancing to Rome again with hasty strides; preaching in spite of articles and subscription, that most pernicious, papistical,

and damnable doctrine of justification by faith and works. Which doctrine, I am verily assured, no one can hold, and be in a state of salvation.—But I trust God is once more visiting in mercy our poor distressed church. He raised up Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Wesley about twenty years ago, who have courageously and successfully preached up the doctrine of our church. And he is now daily raising up more and more clergymen. At Christmas last, I was informed, there were forty clergymen who were brought to the acknowledgment of the truth; and three more have been added to the faith, within the last six weeks. And oh! for ever adored be the mercy of God in opening my eyes, and leading me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

I have sent you a couple of books and a pamphlet, and I make you a present of them. Read them over carefully. And before you begin to read at any time, always look up to the fountain of wisdom for light and direction, For if you rely on your own abilities, or other mens labours, God may keep you ignorant of his glorious gospel, as a punishment for your presumption and neglect of him.

When I sat down to write, I did not intend to have filled more than half a sheet, but when I took my pen in hand, I knew not how to lay it aside. I have wrote my sentiments with great freedom, and I hope without offence. May God give a blessing to what I have wrote: may he enlighten your eyes, as he hath done mine, adored be his mercy: may he lead you by his spirit to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus; and make you instrumental in bringing souls from darkness into light, and translating them out of the kingdom of Satan into the glorious kingdom of his dear Son. *Amen, Amen.*

Everton,

July 3, 1758.

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his own cause; though God declares that every mouth shall be stopped before him, and the whole world brought in guilty before God. Rom. iii. 19. — And why was the publican justified? not on account of his own good works, but because he was sensible of his evil ones; and accordingly came self-accused, self-condemned, and crying out only for mercy.

And now, dear sir, hear what is the rise and progress of true religion in the soul of man. When the spirit of God has convinced any person that he is a child of wrath and under the curse of God, (in which state every one continues to be till he has received Jesus Christ into his heart by faith) then the heart of such an one becomes broken for sin; then too he feels what he never knew before, that he has no faith, and accordingly laments his evil heart of unbelief. In this state men continue some a longer, some a less time, till God is pleased to work faith in them. Then they are justified, and are at peace with God, Rom. v. 1. i. e. have their sins forgiven them, for that is the meaning of the word *peace*. See Luke vii. 48—50. — When we have received faith from God (for it is his gift, Ephes. ii. 8.) to justify our persons, then we afterwards receive the spirit to sanctify our natures. Ephes. i. 13.—Gal. iii. 14. And now the work of sanctification goes forward, now his fruit is more and more unto holiness; now the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the holy spirit, Rom. v. 5. now he walks in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, Acts ix. 13. Now he is filled with joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. now he rejoiceth with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. And now he hath the spirit of God bearing witness with his own spirit, that he is a child of God. Rom. viii. 16.—1 John v. 10 — These are the things that I was an utter stranger to before, notwithstanding all my
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reading, watching, and praying; and these are things that every one must be a stranger to, 'till he is made a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

But to proceed; though a believer is continually more and more sanctified in body, soul and spirit, yet his hopes of heaven are not built on his sanctification, but on his faith in Christ; he knows that he is only compleat in Christ, Col. ii. 10. And that the moment he seeks to be justified by his own obedience to God's laws, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in Christ, Gal. v. 4 — Accordingly, though he labours to abound in all the fruits of righteousness, yet, like St. Paul, he desires to be found only in Christ, not having, i. e. not relying on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of God by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

And now let me point out to you the grand delusion which had like to have ruined my soul. I saw very early something of the unholiness of my nature, and the necessity of being born again. Accordingly I watched, prayed, and fasted too, thinking to purify my heart by these means, whereas it can only be purified by faith, Acts xv. 9. Watching, praying, and fasting are necessary duties, but I, like many others, placed some secret reliances on them, thinking they were to do that for me, in part at least, which Christ only could. The truth is, though I saw myself to be a sinner, and a great sinner, yet I did not see myself an utter lost sinner, and therefore I could not come to Jesus Christ alone to save me; despised the doctrine of justification by faith alone, looking on it as a foolish and a dangerous doctrine; I was not yet stripped of all my righteousness, could not consider it all as filthy rags, and therefore I was about to establish a righteousness of my own, and did not submit to the righteousness of God by faith.

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Does not follow - always in some other work

rightly performing whatever he requires : that our only business was to love and delight ourselves in God : that for his own part, he was pleased when he could take up even a straw in obedience to the divine will : that he had no other care but faithfully to reject every other thought : that we should not be weary of doing the smallest thing for God, as he regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."

He had no fear or apprehension of death, because he was always ready to lay down his life out of love to God. And giving advice to some that were in distress, he said, " We should consider ourselves as worthy of all contempt, and not to deserve the name of Christians : as persons whom God would humble by many pains and labours ; then we should no longer wonder that troubles and oppositions befall us."

" Perfect resignation, said he, is the sure way to heaven, and sufficient light for our conduct. God always gives us light in our doubts when we have no other design but to please him. In difficulties we need only have recourse to Jesus Christ, and beg his grace, by which every thing becomes easy. We should seek no happiness but in fulfilling the will of God, whether he please to lead us by sufferings or consolations ; and all will be equal to a soul resigned and thoroughly united with him. He that thus enjoys God, is desirous of nothing but him. Pain and sufferings would be paradise to me, while I should suffer in the presence of God. The greatest pleasure would be hell if I could relish them without him. All my consolation would be to suffer something for his sake. The whole world suffer ; and I who deserve so great punishment feel continual joy. I could willingly ask of God to suffer a part of what befalls others, but that I am assured of my weakness to bear any thing. If he left me a moment I should be the most wretched man alive."

The hours set apart for prayer were but a continuation of his constant exercise. " I present myself,

said

said he, before God ; beseech him to form his perfect image in my soul, and render me entirely like himself. When the appointed time of prayer is over, I find no difference, because I still continue with God, praising and blessing him with all my might. And I am assured beyond all doubt it hath been thus with me for above thirty years. I have no uneasiness about my state, because I have no will but that of God."

" I must, said he, go to him. My comfort is, that I now see him by faith, so that I could sometimes say, that believing is lost in sight. I feel what faith teaches ; and in that assurance, and continued act of love, I will live and die with him." In a letter he wrote two days before he took to his bed and died, he said, " I expect, from his mercy, the favour to see him in a few days. Let us pray for each other."

It is said of him, that his very countenance was edifying, and could not but affect the beholders. A sweet calm devotion always appeared in his face ; and in the greatest hurry of business he preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness, doing every thing in order, with great composure of spirit, never being hasty, or seen to loiter. The time of business, he said, did not differ with him from that of prayer ; so that in the noise and hurry of others, when several were calling on him at the same time, for different things, he possessed God as entirely, and with the same tranquillity of spirit, as if he had been at the Lord's Table.

I shall conclude with the words of a celebrated writer : — ' I desire you to remember what I have often recommended, which is, That you do not forget God, day nor night, in any of your employments. Think often upon him ; pray to him without ceasing ; live and die with him. This is the best work you can be employed in. It is our profession, trade, and calling. — If we do not know it, we must learn it ; and use ourselves to a continual, familiar, and humble conversation and intercourse with him.'

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